to (c) Export target for 1988-89 has been fixed at Rs. 18795 crores as compared to provisional export figures of Rs. 15719 crores during 1987-88. As a part of the strategy for increasing exports and exceed the target fixed for 1988-89 Government have initiated dialogue with Export Promotion Councils, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry large industrial houses and other export promotion agencies. During these meetings these organisations were exhorted to take all steps to achieve higher level of exports. The participants in these meetings have assured the government that they would strive to achieve a higher growth rate.

(d) The Government has implemented a number of measures to facilitate increased capacity for export production to upgrade technology to make the export sector being more competitive through improved access to capital goods and raw materials at near international prices and providing fiscal and monetary incentives for increasing exports.

Erosion of the Bhagirathi River Bank in Uluberia (West Bengal)

1024. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the serious situation of Uluberia in West Bengal due to erosion of the bank of river Bhagirathi;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether any action has been taken to save Uluberia; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI): (a) to (d) The Government of West Bengal has taken urgent palliative measures at an estimated cost of Rs. 10 lakhs to restore the damage caused due to subsidence to the embankment.

Embracing of Sikh Religion by Harijans in Meerut

1025. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 350 Harijan families have embraced Sikh religion in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh recently;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir. As per State Government's report 332 Harijans have embraced Sikh religion in Meerut District during the period November, 1988 to January, 1989.

(b) The Harijans of the Nagla Hereru area, who had been unhappy with the lack of support from caste Hindus in their disputes with the Muslims, especially from July, 1988, after the Gram Pradhan elections preferred to embrace Sikhism as a solution to their problems.

(c) It being public law and order problem the State Government is of the view that voluntary conversion is not objectionable unless use of force, inducement, or fraudulent means are established, for which provisions exists under IPC 352, 506 and 508. The